

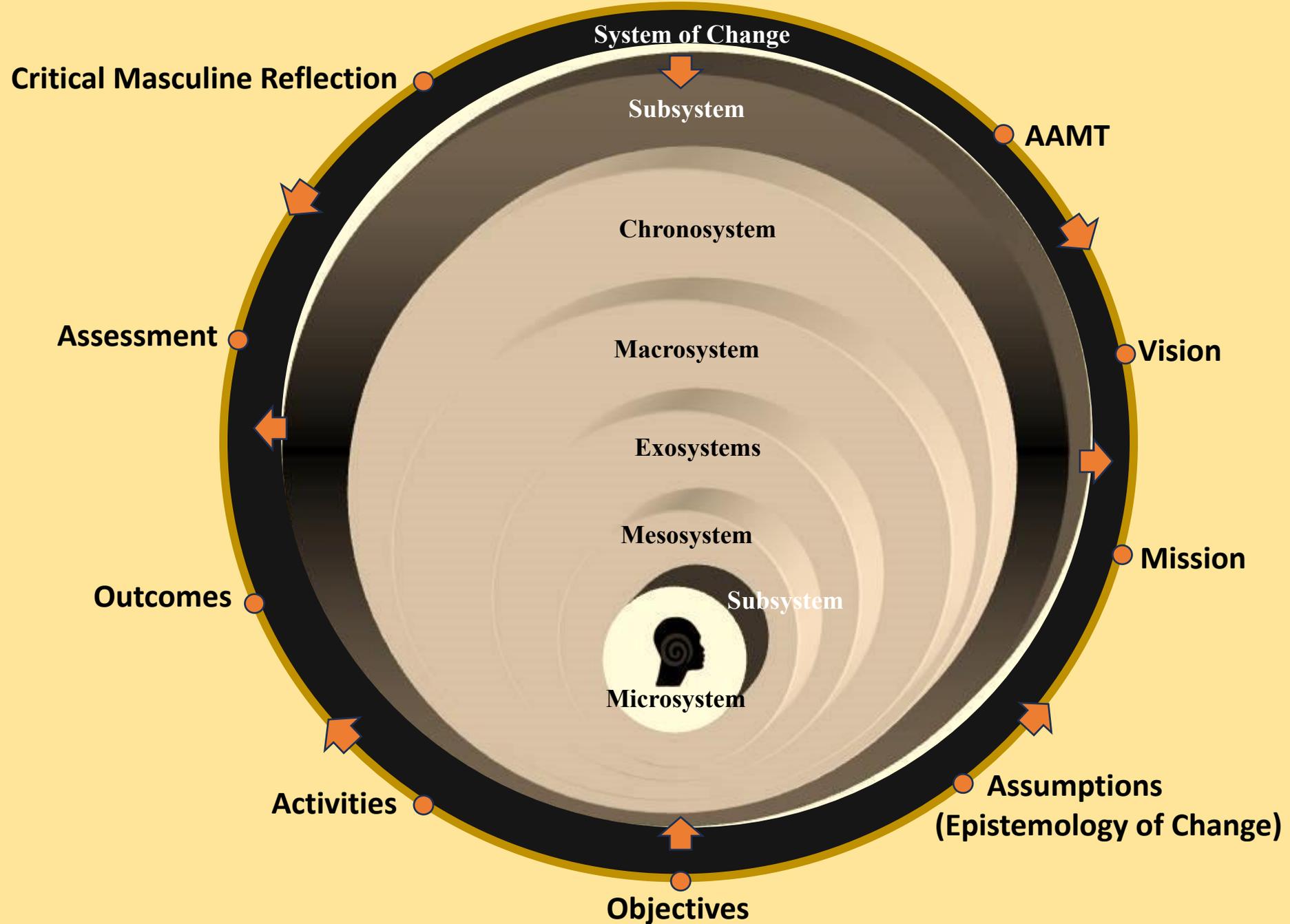
A²MEND's Theory of Change

2024

From Creating Programs to Building Institutions to becoming an Institution

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A²MEND's Theory of Change Model



A²MEND's Theory of Change

Theoretical Framework: Black Male Theory

1. The individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcomes, events, phenomena, and trajectory of Black boys' and men's lives are best analyzed using an ecological systems approach. Building upon the ancient and current African worldview as well as Bronfenbrenner's work, African American Male Theory (AAMT) suggests that Black boys and men exist in a symbiotic and bidirectional relationship with other beings, matter, concepts, and phenomena. Thus, AAMT provides a conceptual framework that can be used to describe and analyze the interrelated structures, systems, and processes that occur in these dynamic and multidimensional environments that influence the development, experiences, outcomes, and trajectory of Black boys and men.

2. There is something unique about being male and of African descent.

Whether stemming from nature, nurture, or a combination thereof, there is something unique about being male and of African descent. Although AAMT also affirms the uniqueness of other populations and groups and is interested in what makes Black males similar to other populations, AAMT is specifically concerned with examining and discovering what is distinctive about this population as a group and with understanding individual distinctions within the group.

3. There is a continuity and continuation of African culture, consciousness, and biology that influence the experiences of Black boys and men.

AAMT asserts that the study of Black men and boys must be anchored in an understanding of Africa because African culture and consciousness have a persistent impact on Black boys and men. The study of these relationships requires multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, and their implications can be seen in both the social sciences and humanities.

4. Black boys and men are resilient and resistant.

AAMT posits that Black boys and men are born with an innate desire for self-determination and with an unlimited capacity for morality and intelligence. AAMT embraces resilience theory and opposes deficit paradigms, thinking, and practice. From this viewpoint, it is apparent that social and educational challenges that face this group stem from socially constructed systems rather than any innate biological or cultural deficiencies. AAMT considers all forms of resistance and opposition demonstrated by Black boys and men as a strength, although some manifestations may be counterproductive to what is viewed as "success" or "productivity" in White mainstream society.

5. Race and racism, coupled with classism and sexism, have a profound impact on every aspect of the lives of Black boys and men.

Like CRT, AAMT views racism as an omnipresent force in society. AAMT is particularly interested in how racism has an impact on the lives of Black boys and men. Moreover, AAMT is interested in understanding how being male and of a certain class may gain some Black boys and men privilege in some spaces, and, thereby, scholars of AAMT seek to be in dialogue with such perspectives.

6. The focus and purpose of study and programs that concern Black boys and men should be the pursuit of social justice.

The intent of AAMT is to undermine oppression through explicitly investigating, exposing, and correcting those practices, policies, programs, systems, concepts, and institutions that promote its continuation. Nevertheless, AAMT is not a reactionary theory. The aim is not to respond to cultural hegemony and racism but, rather, to explicitly account for it, as AAMT draws upon the historical and current culture, consciousness, and community to determine what is and strive to achieve social justice for Black boys and men.

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New Vision Statement

The vision of A²MEND is to transform higher education with a specific focus on community colleges while creating educational healing spaces where Black males are free to be successful as defined by their history, culture, and current circumstances. To achieve our vision, we strive to:

- Be the leading influencer of educational policy and practice for Black males.
- Transform the educational enterprise into a system of pro-Blackness.
- Lead and advance the implementation of African-centered education in Africa and throughout the diaspora.
- Create and support independent and quasi-independent educational institutions centered on African epistemologies and practices.
- Build racial trauma healing and wellness training center(s) for professionals.
- Prepare Black men to be exceptional professionals, family leaders, and community advocates.
- Create parallel opportunities and spaces for Black women in their educational and professional development.
- Expand A²MEND's student charters to colleges and universities nationwide.

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New Mission Statement

A²MEND's mission is to advocate for the academic, psychological and spiritual development of Black male students, faculty, staff and administrators in educational systems.

A²MEND educators utilize their scholarship, professional expertise and influence to foster institutional change while creating independent educational spaces and institutions to increase the success of Black male students within education and other systems.

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Assumptions

In addition to the constructs inherent to AAMT, A²MEND's Theory of Change holds the following assumptions:

- Pro-Black environments, institutions, and practices, that are particularly attentive to Black men and boys have a collateral positive impact on other historically excluded groups.
- Masculinity is inherently good. It serves as an attractive energy, sharpening tool, and a force to create space for others, including women, to move freely as their authentic selves.
- A change in consciousness leads to a change in behaviors which occurs within an ecological context and dynamic.
- Change and healing are inextricably linked. It is nearly impossible to heal in the mist of ongoing oppression and while being situated in spaces and lands of historical terror.
- Change and healing for Africans in America occurs in protected homogeneous spaces, particularly on those lands and spaces that have a longer history of being indigenous.
- Success for Black male students is not merely defined by graduation rates and grades. Rather, it is measured by the ability for Black men to manifest who they are as defined by their historical, cultural, and community norms of African-centeredness and divinity.

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Objectives

A²MEND's Theory of Change outlines a comprehensive set of objectives to foster success, empowerment, and systemic transformation for Black males in higher education with a specific focus on community colleges. These objectives align with the organization's mission and vision, emphasizing the integration of AAMT and a commitment to reshaping educational environments. The key objectives within A²MEND's Theory of Change include:

- 1. Influence Educational Policy and Practice:** A²MEND seeks to be a leading influencer in shaping educational policy and practice specifically for Black males in higher education with a specific focus on community colleges and beyond. This objective reflects a commitment to systemic change, advocating for policies that address the unique needs and challenges Black men face in the educational landscape.
- 2. Transform Colleges into Pro-Black Spaces:** A primary objective is to transform higher education with a specific focus on community colleges enterprise into a system characterized by pro-Blackness. This goes beyond individual success stories as this objective aims to reshape the entire educational ecosystem to be culturally responsive, inclusive, and affirmative of Black males.
- 3. Establish Independent and Quasi-Independent Educational Institutions:** A²MEND envisions creating and supporting independent educational institutions and Quasi-Independent centered on African epistemologies and practices. This objective recognizes the importance of fostering spaces where Black males can engage with educational content rooted in their cultural heritage, providing more meaningful and relevant learning.
- 4. Build Independent Healing and Training Centers for Black Educators:** Establishing centers focused on healing and training for Black educators is a strategic objective. This recognizes the crucial role educators play in shaping the educational experience. These centers aim to provide support, training, and healing for educators who, in turn, can contribute to a more nurturing and culturally responsive educational environment.
- 5. Support Life and Career Development for Black men:** A core objective involves supporting Black men in their life and career development within higher education with a specific focus on community colleges and broader family and community contexts. This includes creating parallel opportunities and spaces for Blackwomen, emphasizing the importance of holistic community development.
- 6. Expand A²MEND's student charters beyond California and to 4-year institutions:** As A²MEND's overall mission and vision grows, fulfilling this objective will work to keep the organization attentive to its original thrust by grounding its members in the daily lives of Black male college students.

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Activities for A²MEND's Theory of Change

- 1. Influence Educational Policy and Practice in higher education with a specific focus on community colleges.**
 - **Black Policy Think tank:** Create a statewide thinktank that focuses addressing anti-Black policies and practices and produces pro-Black policies.
 - **Policy Research Initiatives:** Collaborate with researchers to conduct studies on the impact of existing policies on Black male success, providing evidence for policy recommendations.
 - **Engagement with Decision-Makers:** Facilitate meetings and dialogues between A²MEND representatives and policymakers to articulate the vision and advocate for policy changes.
 - **Galvanize the Masses:** Use A²MEND's annual conferences to introduce new language, policy, and practice to influence and galvanize change from the bottom up and with key stakeholders who have significant political and social capital.
- 2. Transform higher education with a specific focus on community colleges into Pro-Black Spaces:**
 - **Pro-Black Blueprint:** Develop a blueprint for higher education to follow to create pro-Black institutions.
 - **African-centered Training in Africa:** Develop and implement pro-Black competency training programs for faculty, staff, and administrators within in higher education with a specific focus on community colleges that start in Africa with ongoing support within higher education systems.
 - **Pro-Black Scorecard** Develop a scorecard that measures and tracks progress towards creating pro-Black institutions.
 - **Consultants:** Develop and fully staffed consulting branch of A²MEND that aids high education in becoming pro-Black in all areas of the educational enterprise.
- 3. Establish Independent Educational and Quasi-Independent Institutions:**
 - **Feasibility Studies:** Conduct feasibility studies to identify regions or communities where there is the best fit for independent educational and quasi-independent institutions centered on African epistemologies.
 - **Quasi-Independent Community College Strategic Plan:** Create a strategic plan to turn and existing community college or system into an African-centered public educational enterprise.
 - **Independent Community College Strategic Plan:** Develop a strategic plan create a private African-centered California community college.

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Activities for A²MEND's Theory of Change Cont'd

4. **Build Independent Healing and Training Centers for Black Educators:**
 - **Healing and Training Center in Africa:** Develop a strategic plan build and maintain a healing and training center on the land purchased in Ghana, West Africa
 - **Healing Retreats:** Host healing and training retreats in the US and Africa that offer educators a space for healing, self-reflection, and community building before the site in Africa is completed.
5. **Support Life and Career Development for Black men:**
 - **Mentorship Programs:** Establish formal mentorship programs for professionals and graduate students connecting Black men with successful professionals in their fields of interest.
 - **Rite-of-Passage:** Organize a rites-of-passage program for men to cultivate the type of manhood to carryout the aims and objectives of A²MEND.
6. **Expand Student Charters Beyond California and to 4-year Institutions:**
 - **Visit Institutions:** Identify and visit potential institutions and advisors for student charters.
 - **Student Charter Summit:** Host a special student charter summit inviting potential institutions, advisors, and students.

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Outcomes for A²MEND's Theory of Change

Objective 1: Influence Educational Policy and Practice in higher education with a specific focus on community college :

- 1. Black Policy Think tank:**
 - Outcome: Establishment of evidence-based pro-Black policies, leading to a measurable reduction in anti-Black practices within in higher education with a specific focus on community colleges.
- 2. Policy Research Initiatives:**
 - Outcome: Implementation of informed policy changes based on research findings, resulting in improved success rates for Black males in higher education.
- 3. Engagement with Decision-Makers:**
 - Outcome: Adoption of A²MEND's vision through policy changes, demonstrating increased understanding and commitment from key decision-makers in the educational landscape.
- 4. Galvanize the Masses through Annual Conferences:**
 - Outcome: Increased awareness and adoption of new language, policies, and practices among conference attendees, fostering a groundswell of support for systemic change.

Objective 2: Transform higher education into Pro-Black Spaces:

- 1. Pro-Black Blueprint:**
 - Outcome: Implementation and proliferation of pro-Black institutions in community colleges following the blueprint, resulting in affirming environments for Black students, faculty, and staff and a better learning milieu and educational outcomes for all students.
- 2. African-centered Training in Africa:**
 - Outcome: Implementation of African-centered education in higher education for a better learning milieu and educational outcomes for all students.
- 3. Pro-Black Scorecard:**
 - Outcome: Measurable progress towards pro-Black institutions, tracked through the scorecard, demonstrating commitment and success of Black students.
- 4. Consultants:**
 - Outcome: higher education transformed into pro-Black spaces with ongoing support to maintain such dramatic changes.

Objective 3: Establish Independent Educational and Quasi-Independent Institutions:

- 1. Feasibility Studies:**
 - Outcome: Identification and establishment of independent and quasi-independent institutions centered on African epistemologies in regions or communities, offering alternatives to traditional educational models.
- 2. Quasi-Independent and Independent Community College Strategic Plans:**
 - Outcome: Transformation of existing community colleges and creation of private African-centered community colleges.

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Outcomes for A²MEND's Theory of Change (Cont'd)

Objective 4: Build Independent Healing and Training Centers for Black Educators:

1. Healing and Training Center in Africa:

- Outcome: Successful development and maintenance of a healing and training center in Ghana, West Africa, providing a transformative and life-altering experience for educators.

2. Healing Retreats:

- Outcome: Educators participating in healing and training retreats experience personal growth, fostering a community of educators dedicated and better equipped to create healthy and affirming environments for all students.

Objective 5: Support Life and Career Development for Black men:

1. Mentorship Programs:

- Outcome: Professionals and graduate students benefit from mentorship programs, leading to enhanced career development and increased success in their respective fields.

2. Rites-of-Passage:

- Outcome: Men participating in rites-of-passage programs cultivate a particular masculinity and manhood to support A²MEND's objectives.

Objective 6: Expand Student Charters Beyond California and to 4-year Institutions Men:

1. Visit Institutions:

- Outcome: Visiting potential institutions will lead to an increase in charter outside of California and 4-year colleges outside of the state.

2. Student Charter Summit:

- Outcome: Hosting a summit would strengthen existing charters and lead to an increase in new charters across the state and beyond.

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Assessment Plan for A²MEND's Theory of Change

Objective 1: Influence Educational Policy and Practice in higher education with a specific focus on community colleges. :

- 1. Black Policy Think Tank:**
 - **Assessment Activities:**
 - Conduct an annual review of the think tank's research outputs and policy recommendations.
 - Administer a biennial survey to college administrators to assess the adoption and impact of pro-Black policies.
 - **Indicators:**
 - Number of policy recommendations produced annually.
 - Percentage of targeted colleges adopting pro-Black policies.
- 2. Policy Research Initiatives:**
 - **Assessment Activities:**
 - Periodically evaluate the implementation of policy changes based on research findings.
 - Conduct surveys or focus groups every two years with educators to measure the perceived impact of policy changes on Black male success.
 - **Indicators:**
 - Number of implemented policy changes.
 - Educators' feedback on policy effectiveness.
- 3. Engagement with Decision-Makers:**
 - **Assessment Activities:**
 - Analyze records of meetings with decision-makers and track policy changes influenced.
 - Administer surveys or focus groups to decision-makers to gauge their understanding and commitment to A²MEND's vision.
 - **Indicators:**
 - Number of policy changes influenced.
 - Decision-makers' feedback on understanding and commitment.
- 4. Galvanize the Masses through Annual Conferences:**
 - **Assessment Activities:**
 - Evaluate annual conference attendance trends and participation levels.
 - Analyze post-conference surveys to assess the adoption of new language, policies, and practices.
 - **Indicators:**
 - Annual conference attendance numbers.
 - Percentage of attendees adopting new initiatives.

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Assessment Plan for A²MEND's Theory of Change (Cont'd)

Objective 2: Transform higher education with a specific focus on community colleges into Pro-Black Spaces:

- 1. Pro-Black Blueprint:**
 - **Assessment Activities:**
 - Conduct regular assessments of the adoption of the pro-Black blueprint by targeted colleges.
 - Conduct focus groups and administer surveys to faculty and administrators to measure satisfaction and challenges in implementing the blueprint.
 - **Indicators:**
 - Percentage of targeted colleges adopting the blueprint.
 - Feedback on satisfaction and challenges from surveys.
- 2. African-centered Training in Africa:**
 - **Assessment Activities:**
 - Evaluate the implementation of African-centered training programs.
 - Conduct focus groups with participants to measure the effectiveness of the training and ongoing support.
 - **Indicators:**
 - Implementation rate of training programs.
 - Participant satisfaction with training and ongoing support.
- 3. Pro-Black Scorecard:**
 - **Assessment Activities:**
 - Regularly update and analyze the pro-Black scorecard metrics.
 - Administer surveys to targeted colleges to assess progress and gather suggestions for improvement.
 - **Indicators:**
 - Scorecard update frequency.
 - Progress towards pro-Black institutions.
- 4. Consultants:**
 - **Assessment Activities:**
 - Assess the engagement of colleges with the consulting branch.
 - Administer surveys to colleges and consultants to evaluate the effectiveness of consulting services.
 - **Indicators:**
 - Number of consulting engagements.
 - Transformation rate of targeted colleges.

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Assessment Plan for A²MEND's Theory of Change (Cont'd)

Objective 3: Establish Independent Educational and Quasi-Independent Institutions:

1. Feasibility Studies:

- **Assessment Activities:**

- Assess the progress of feasibility studies in identifying suitable dynamics, situations, and spaces.
- Track the establishment of independent and quasi-independent institutions.

- **Indicators:**

- Progress in feasibility studies.
- Number of independent institutions established.

2. Quasi-Independent and Independent Community College Strategic Plans:

- **Assessment Activities:**

- Regularly review the progress of strategic plans in transforming community colleges into quasi-independent institutions.
- Track the development of private African-centered community colleges.

- **Indicators:**

- Progress in strategic plan implementation.
- Establishment of private African-centered community colleges.
- Establishment of public quasi-independent African-centered community colleges.

Objective 4: Build Independent Healing and Training Centers for Black Educators:

1. Healing and Training Center in Africa:

- **Assessment Activities:**

- Assess the development and maintenance of the center in Ghana.
- Track the participation of educators in healing retreats.

- **Indicators:**

- Progress in the development of the center.
- Participation in healing retreats.

2. Healing Retreats:

- **Monitoring Activities:**

- Track the hosting of healing and training retreats.
- Conduct focus groups with participants to measure the effectiveness of healing retreats.

- **Indicators:**

- Frequency of retreats.
- Feedback on participant experiences.

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Assessment Plan for A²MEND's Theory of Change (Cont'd)

Objective 5: Support Life and Career Development for Black men:

1. Mentorship Programs:

- **Assessment Activities:**

- Assess the establishment and participation in mentorship programs.
- Administer surveys to mentors and mentees to measure the perceived impact on career development.

- **Indicators:**

- Number of mentorship programs established.
- Career progression of program participants.

2. Rites-of-Passage:

- **Assessment Activities:**

- Track the organization and participation in rites-of-passage programs.
- Assess the cultivation of manhood among participants.

- **Indicators:**

- Frequency of rites-of-passage programs.
- Feedback on the impact on participants' manhood.

Objective 6: Expand Student Charters Beyond California and to 4-year Institutions:

1. Visit Institutions:

- **Assessment Activities:**

- Administer surveys to institutions to assess interest and feasibility.
- Assess the establishment and participation in student charters.

- **Indicators:**

- Number of institutions interested in starting student charters.
- Increase number of student charters.

2. Student Charter Summit:

- **Assessment Activities:**

- Administer surveys to assess the effectiveness of the summit in establishing new charters.

- **Indicators:**

- Number of institutions interested in starting student charters.
- Increase number of student charters.

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Assessment Plan for A²MEND's Theory of Change (Cont'd)

Cross-Cutting Assessment Activities:

1. Data Collection:

- Regularly collect quantitative and qualitative data related to each objective and activity.

2. Stakeholder Feedback:

- Solicit feedback from stakeholders through focus groups and surveys, including community colleges, educators, policymakers, and program participants.

3. Progress Reports:

- Regularly compile and review progress reports from each programmatic area to assess overall progress toward objectives.

4. Reporting and Communication:

- Provide regular reports to A²MEND leadership and stakeholders summarizing assessment activities, key findings, and progress towards objectives.

5. Adaptive Management:

- Use assessment data to inform adaptive management strategies, making adjustments to activities or objectives as needed to enhance effectiveness.

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Critical Masculine Reflection

Critical Masculine Reflection involves a systematic and thoughtful examination of the organization's mission, vision, objectives, impact, and members. It goes beyond routine assessments and reporting, encouraging individuals within the organization to analyze their activities, outcomes, and underlying assumptions deeply. Moreover, it draws heavily on the energy of masculinity and the axiomatic notion of “iron sharpens iron” to forge deeper reflection and accountability for individual members, collectively as an organization, and the entire symbiotic ecological system in which the organization and members are situated. It values and cultivates confrontation with care and purpose. Building on its theoretical roots of AAMT, which rejects all deficit approaches to framing and engaging Black men and boys; in this practice, masculinity is viewed as inherently good, serving as a potent, attractive energy, sharpening tool, and a force to create space, specifically for Black women and others, to move freely as their authentic selves.

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Critical Masculine Reflection Plan

Objectives:

1. Deep Self-Reflection:

- Encourage individual members to engage in introspective analysis of their personal and professional journeys.
- Prompt reflection on the impact of masculinity and centering Africa and Blackness on personal growth and interactions within the organization.

2. Organizational Impact Assessment:

- Evaluate the alignment of A²MEND's mission, vision, and objectives with the principles of AAMT.
- Assess the organization's impact on the well-being of its members and the broader community.

3. Community Connection:

- Explore the symbiotic relationships between A²MEND's and the ecological system it operates within.
- Identify opportunities for positive contributions to the community and foster collaboration.

4. Confrontation with Care and Purpose:

- Integrate the value of confrontation as a tool for growth and accountability within the organization.
- Emphasize the importance of addressing challenges with care and purpose, avoiding a deficit-oriented mindset and practice.

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Critical Masculine Reflection Plan (Cont'd)

Implementation:

1. Individual Reflection Sessions:

- Provide resources and guidelines for members to conduct personal reflections.
- Encourage the use of journals or guided prompts to facilitate deep self-analysis.

2. Group Dialogues:

- Organize regular group discussions where members can share insights and challenges and be challenged in areas of needed growth.
- Create a safe space for open and honest communication that also provides opportunity for confrontation with care and purpose.

3. Mission and Impact Workshop:

- Conduct a workshop or meeting to revisit and refine A²MEND's mission and impact goals through the lens of AAMT.
- Ensure alignment with the organization's commitment to its underlined assumptions in the Theory of Change

4. Community Engagement Initiatives:

- Develop and implement projects that demonstrate A²MEND's commitment to community well-being.
- Collaborate with external partners to strengthen ties and create a positive impact on the broader ecological system.